AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all previous claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of detecting or differentiating rheumatoid arthritis, comprising:

measuring the level ~~wherein the levels~~ of human lipocalin-type prostaglandin D synthase (L-GDS) in a sample collected from a subject ~~is measured~~ free of renal disease and/or ischemic heart disease; and

detecting or differentiating rheumatoid arthritis if the level of L-PGDS is higher in the sample collected from the subject free of renal disease and/or ischemic heart disease than it is in a healthy volunteer and/or in a patient with a joint disease other than rheumatoid arthritis.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of detecting or differentiating rheumatoid arthritis according to claim 1, wherein

~~the levels of human L-PGDS in a sample collected from a subject is measured, and~~ the measured level of human L-PGDS ~~measurement value~~ is compared with a predetermined cut-off value ~~that has been predetermined~~ based on measurements ~~values~~ of human L-PGDS in samples collected from healthy volunteers and/or patients with joint diseases other than rheumatoid arthritis.

3. (Currently Amended) A method of determining the stage of disease with regard to rheumatoid arthritis, comprising:

measuring the level ~~wherein the levels~~ of human L-PGDS in a sample collected from a subject <u>free of renal disease and/or ischemic heart disease;</u> ~~is measured~~ and

determining the stage of disease with regard to rheumatoid arthritis<u>, wherein L-PGDS concentration increases with advancement of the stage of disease</u> ~~is estimated based on the measurement value.~~

4. (Currently Amended) The method of determining the stage of disease with regard to rheumatoid arthritis according to claim 3, wherein

~~the levels of human L-PGDS in a sample collected from a subject is measured and~~ the ~~measurement value~~ <u>measured level of human L-PGDS</u> is compared with a <u>predetermined</u> cut-off value ~~that has been predetermined~~ based on ~~classification of~~ measurement<u>s</u> ~~values~~ of human L-PGDS in samples collected from rheumatoid arthritis patients <u>classified</u> in accordance with the stage of disease.

5. (Currently Amended) A method of determining the degree of dysfunction <u>or severity</u> with regard to rheumatoid arthritis<u>, comprising:</u>

measuring the level ~~wherein the levels~~ of human L-PGDS in a sample <u>collected from a subject free of renal disease and/or ischemic heart disease;</u> ~~is measured~~ and

determining the degree of dysfunction <u>or</u> [[(]]severity[[)]] with regard to rheumatoid arthritis<u>, wherein L-PGDS concentration increases with advancement of the degree of dysfunction or severity</u> ~~is estimated based on the measurement value.~~

6. (Currently Amended) The method of determining the degree of dysfunction <u>or</u>

<u>severity</u> with regard to rheumatoid arthritis according to claim 5, wherein

the <u>measured level</u> ~~levels~~ of human L-PGDS ~~in a sample is measured and the~~

~~measurement value~~ is compared with [[the]] <u>a predetermined</u> cut-off value ~~that has been~~

~~predetermined~~ based on ~~classification of~~ measurement<u>s</u> ~~values~~ of human L-PGDS in samples

collected from rheumatoid arthritis patients <u>classified</u> in accordance with the degree of

dysfunction <u>or</u> [[(]]severity[[)]].

7. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the ~~levels~~ <u>level</u> of

human L-PGDS in a sample is measured by immunoassay.

8. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the sample is a

body fluid.

9. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the sample is a

joint fluid.

10. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the sample is

urine or blood.

11. – 14. (Canceled)

15. (New) The method according to claim 2, wherein the cut-off value is the upper limit of a reference interval obtained by the following equation: mean value ± σ x standard deviation (σ = 0.5, 1, 2, 3, or 5).

16. (New) The method according to claim 4, wherein the cut-off value is the upper limit of a reference interval obtained by the following equation: mean value ± σ x standard deviation (σ = 0.5, 1, 2, 3, or 5).

17. (New) The method according to claim 6, wherein the cut-off value is the upper limit of a reference interval obtained by the following equation: mean value ± σ x standard deviation (σ = 0.5, 1, 2, 3, or 5).